

“Characteristics of Commitment,” Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 9:22-23 – June 21st, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, "Characteristics of Commitment."
- The reason I chose this title is because the Apostle Paul was, and is, one the most outstanding examples of being committed.
- He is a model of unwavering commitment to Jesus Christ, of commitment to the church of Christ, and winning souls for Christ.
- To me, this is one of the main reasons we have passages like the one before us in our Bibles, in that it propels us to emulate it.
- Perhaps better said, the Apostle Paul's example of commitment produces a desire within us to follow it so as to also possess it.
- However, as we discovered last week this comes packaged with a problem; the characteristics of commitment come at a cost.
- Simply put, I have no hope of ever possessing the characteristics of commitment, absent my paying the cost for commitment.
- Actually, this is exactly what we're seeing in this chapter, Paul, who by way of his own example shows us what it will, cost us.
- We saw this with our first one in verses 19-21, where Paul confronts the Corinthian church concerning the cost of selflessness.

1. Selflessness (Verses 19-21)

- Here, Paul tells them that, of his own volition, he becomes like a slave to everyone to win as many as possible to Jesus Christ.

2. Sacrifice (Verses 22-23)

- v22 Paul says that he became weak to win the weak, and he became all things to all people to save some by all mean possible.
- v23 He goes on to explain why saying he does all of this for the sake of the gospel, in order that he may share in its blessings.
- Please don't think that Paul ever compromised the gospel in his efforts to become all things to all people in order to win them.

Of this one commentator said, "We should not think Paul changed his doctrine or message to appeal to different groups (he denies this in 1 Corinthians 1:22-23), but he would change his behavior and manner of approach."

Adam Clarke wrote this about Paul compromising, "Let those who plead for the system of accommodation on the example of St. Paul, attend to the end he had in view, and the manner in which he pursued that end. It was not to get money, influence, or honor, but to save SOULS! It was not to get ease but to increase his labors. It was not to save his life, but rather that it should be a sacrifice for the good of immortal souls!"

- If you were to ask me what I thought was one of the biggest obstacles to commitment as Christians, it would have be sacrifice.
- This because, some Christians are unwilling to make the sacrifices that commitment requires, which is why they never commit.
- Show me a committed Christian I'll show you a sacrificing Christian, conversely, those who aren't committed haven't sacrificed.
- The problem is, some Christian's seem to get by in their walk with Christ, without making the sacrifices others make for Christ.
- You'll forgive me for categorizing Christians, but some Christians are in the category of total committed, while others are not.
- Sadly, some Christians are just half-hearted in their commitment to Christ, while others are whole-hearted in their commitment.

Romans 12:1-2, 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. 2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

About 30-years ago now, when I was a young Christian, I came across a writing from a Wesleyan Methodist pastor by the name of G. D. Watson. The title of this particular devotional was, "OTHERS MAY, YOU CANNOT." Kindly allow me to share it with you, as I believe it speaks to this matter of sacrificial commitment in the life of a Christian. -- If God has called you to be really like Christ in all your spirit, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility and put on you such demands of obedience, that He will not allow you to follow other Christians, and in many ways He will seem to let other good people do things which He will not let you do. Others can brag on themselves, and their work, on their success, on their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing, and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works. The Lord will let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hid away in obscurity because He wants to produce some choice fragrant fruit for His glory, which can be produced only in the shade. Others will be allowed to succeed in making money, but it is likely God will keep you poor because he wants you to have something far better than gold and that is a helpless dependence on Him; that He may have the privilege of supplying your needs day by day - out of an unseen treasury. God will let others be great, but He will keep you small. He will let others do a great work for Him and get credit for it, but He will make you work and toil on without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious, He will let others get the credit for the work you have done, and this will make your reward ten times greater when He comes. The Holy Spirit will put strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for little words and feelings, or for wasting your time, which other Christians never seem distressed over. So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has a right to do what He pleases with His own, and He will not explain to you a thousand things which may puzzle your reason in His dealing with you. He will wrap you up in a jealous love, and let other people say and do many things that you cannot do or say. Settle it forever, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chaining your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that others are not dealt with. Now, when you are so possessed with the Living God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this particular personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of heaven.